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The community responds to Jackson's death

In the days that followed, a variety of responses to Jackson's murder were considered by the SCLC and SNCC leadership. The most provocative was to march to Montgomery and place the martyr's body on the steps of the state capitol building. While this idea in part was rejected, the concept of the march to the state capitol was inspirational. A concerted plan was developed by the key organizations involved to conduct a profoundly overt act that would decisively weigh the scales on favor of voting rights. The plan was to march the 54-miles from Selma to Montgomery where a rally would be held on the steps of the state capitol and where movement leaders intended to meet with Gov. George Wallace.

The march turns bloody

Accordingly, around 3 p.m. on the afternoon of Sunday, March 7, 1965, approximately 300 protestors, led by Hosea Williams, John Lewis, Albert Turner and Bob Mants, gathered at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma and proceeded through town to the Edmund Pettus Bridge. At that point, the number of the marchers had swelled to 600 as they crossed the span from Selma toward their date with destiny. At the end of the bridge stood Alabama State Troopers and a hastily-organized vigilante band mounted on horses under the direction of Maj. John Cloud. Refusing to speak to Williams, Cloud ordered the marchers to disperse, after which gas canisters were thrown into the crowd. Troopers and horsemen armed with clubs assaulted the protestors who then fled back to Selma.

During the pandemonium that reigned throughout the afternoon, hundreds of non-violent protestors were injured. They were treated at Good Samaritan Hospital, by the Sisters of Saint Joseph and a local clinic. The remaining protestors gathered for a rally at Brown Chapel.

"Bloody Sunday" march becomes defining moment

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Campsites of the March

March 21-24, 1965

- David Hall Farm (March 21)
- Rosie Steele Farm (March 22)
- Robert Gardner Farm (March 23)
- City of St. Jude (March 24)

Foreshadowing the mass encampment, later known as “Tent City,” most of the participants in the Selma-to-Montgomery March embarked upon their journey bearing little more than the clothes on their back, a bedroll, or a knapsack to ease the strain of the 54-mile journey along U.S. Highway 80.

Fifty-four miles to freedom

Facing the cold early spring rains and near-freezing nights, the marchers employed creativity to survive the journey. A “people in motion,” they knew that potential danger lurked around every creek bed or cluster of trees. Even antagonistic National Guardsmen who were present to insure the safety of the marchers posed a potential threat. This legion of activists was prepared at a moment’s notice to seek cover in the event of any emergency. An integral part of the logistical planning for their mission was covering overnight accommodations. Campsites were the obvious and most immediate choice for such a large body, but where? About six miles from Selma, near a rail crossing, 1,000 marchers were to be entrained back to Selma, but instead they remained. The number of participants was now in excess of 10, 000, with more expected. Many African Americans in rural Lowndes County were



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sharecroppers on land owned by whites who opposed civil rights and used intimidation tactics to discourage support of the marchers.

Resting places for the warriors

David Hall, an African-American farmer and father of eight, lived in a four-room house on an 80-acre farm in Dallas County. The first night of the march was critical to the morale of the marchers in an obviously hostile environment. Aware of this situation, Hall became the first black farmer to courageously face harassment from white landowners in the county when he welcomed the marchers to camp on his land for the night. Crews that traveled ahead in trucks set up tents at the site, separated by gender. While volunteer “security marshals” patrolled the campgrounds, physicians and nurses among the marchers answered sick calls and tended to injuries sustained during the protracted journey.

The marcher’s endured rain on two days of the march as the procession continued along the narrow ribbon of Highway 80. Nearby farm communities such as Trickem Fork, other African-American farm families, risking eviction by white landowners, came out in support of the “March to Montgomery,” some bringing food and water or blankets. Mrs. Rosie Steele and Robert Gardner lent their support by providing their land as campsites for the following two nights of the march. Such outpouring of courage in the face of violent resistance brought the March to its successful final night at the City of St. Jude, a Catholic social service complex, where the now famous “Stars for Freedom” Rally was held on March 24, 1965. Though a necessary element for the safety and well-being of the participants, these campsites also served as incubators for life-long comradeship, a strengthening of morale, and improved resolve during the stress-filled nights of the march.




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Crusaders for Civil Rights

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Marion Civic League

This group was formed to organize the effort to obtain jobs and voting rights for African Americans in Perry County. Led by Albert Turner, Rev. A.T. Days, youth leader James Orange and others, this organization planned a series of mass meetings and protests in Perry, Hale, and Greene Counties in early 1965, including the first night march of the campaign that took place in Marion on February 17, 1965 and led to the shooting death of Jimmie Lee Jackson.

Lowndes County Christian Movement for Human Rights and the Lowndes County Freedom Organization

The former was created with the assistance of SCLC in 1965 with John Hulett as the first chairman. The latter was formed with the help of SNCC to get African Americans registered to vote for African-American candidates that might run local government. The Lowndes County Freedom Organization formed a new political party and entered candidates in the local political races. The emblem of this organization was a black panther. The Black Panther Party that was founded in Oakland, California in 1966 traces its roots to this group.



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The Hayneville Story



Inside the Lowndes County Jail, Hayneville, Alabama.

Hayneville, Alabama, the county seat of Lowndes County, Alabama was a hotbed of opposition to voting rights in the early months of 1965. Consequently, Hayneville became a magnet for a variety of progressive activities besides voter registration. The "Freedom School" concept in alternative education was also being exercised in the rural areas of the county.

Voter registration

A confrontation between forces of opposition generally represented by Ku Klux Klan, and those determined to achieve the right to vote for all citizens, became inevitable. On March 1, 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. arrived in Hayneville as part of a four-county mission in support of local voting rights initiatives. In Hayneville that day, thirty-seven African Americans had attempted to register to vote when Dr. King confronted the county registrar, Carl Golson, on the issue of black voter registration. Golson refused to allow the applicants to register at the county jail. Though the voucher requirement for registration was eliminated, only 2 of 17 applicants were registered. Recognizing the need for



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more direct action in Lowndes County, residents in support of voting rights formed the Lowndes County Christian Movement on March 19, 1965, with future County Sheriff John Hulett as the first chairman.

The making of a martyr



Jonathan Daniels holds Rachel West who later co-authored *Selma, Lord Selma* with Sheyanne Webb. Daniels often stayed at the West's home when he was in Selma.

Jonathan "Jon" Myrick Daniels, a student at the Episcopal Theological School in Cambridge, Mass., participated in the Selma-to-Montgomery march and then returned to school to finish his studies for the year. That summer, he made his way back to Selma to work with the Episcopal Society for Cultural and Racial Unity. This work led to the fateful day when he was killed in Hayneville, after having spent a week in the Lowndes County Jail for protesting for voting rights, as he placed himself between Ruby Sales and the shotgun of 55-year old Tom Coleman, a state highway engineer and part-time deputy sheriff. Daniels, who died instantly, is a martyr in the Episcopal Church.

Lowndes County African Americans organize for change

During the ensuing campaign for land reform and voter registration for African Americans, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO) was also founded in 1965 by the late Kwame Touré, known then as Stokely Carmichael. This organization adopted as its symbol the "Black Panther." In November 1966, the LCFO sponsored seven African-American candidates for office. Though this slate was unsuccessful, their pioneering effort led to the election of many African Americans in the decades to follow.

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Martyrs of the Movement I

While the intended course of the movement to affirm the right to vote for African Americans in Alabama was non-violent, the movement to affect change was violently opposed throughout the Civil Rights period. The violence experienced by civil rights leaders and participants took many forms, from psychological intimidation to murder. Few of the perpetrators were ever brought to justice.

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During this event, Alabama State Troopers who had been brought in to augment Marion police led an unprovoked assault on the non-violent marchers. In the ensuing melee, a young African-American activist, Jimmie Lee Jackson, fled into a nearby café where he was shot as he attempted to protect his mother and grandfather. Jimmie Lee Jackson died eight days later at Good Samaritan Hospital in Selma. The murder of Jackson initiated a plan to conduct a march to the Alabama State Capitol in Montgomery to bring focus upon the cause of voting rights and the attendant violence that had plagued their efforts.

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On Sunday, March 7, 1965, over 300 local activists, led by John Lewis, Hosea Williams, Bob Mants, and Albert Turner, crossed the Edmund Pettus Bridge to be confronted by Alabama State Troopers, which resulted in the infamous “Bloody Sunday.” Two days later, on March 9th, in response to a challenge and call from Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., religious leaders from across the country repeated the march to the Edmund Pettus Bridge. At the end of the bridge, they conducted a session of prayer and then returned to their departure point at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in Selma, thus ending the “Ministers’ March.”

Following the “Ministers’ March,” also known as “Turnaround Tuesday,” that evening in Selma, a small group of ministers commiserated over the day’s events and considered what measures would be taken next in pursuit of voting justice. Among this number was a young Unitarian minister from Boston, Massachusetts, Rev. James Reeb. In company with two other ministers, Rev. Reeb was leaving Walker’s Café (today Strong’s Cafeteria #2) when four white men leaving the segregationist Silver Moon Café, located on the corner next to Walker’s, assaulted the group. Rev. Reeb was mortally wounded by a head blow from a blunt instrument in the hands of one segregationist. He died two days later at the University of Alabama, Birmingham Hospital.

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At the conclusion of the five-day march, the participant heard an address given by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. at the steps of the Alabama State Capitol on March 25. Following the rally, throngs of marchers crowded the area of the capitol awaiting transportation back to Selma and elsewhere by volunteer drivers. Mrs. Viola Liuzzo, a Detroit housewife and mother of five, had been an



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On August 6, 1965, less than five months after the Selma to Montgomery march, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the monumental Voting rights Act at the nation's capitol. Many people attribute her killing with the reason for the prompt passage of the Voting Rights act of 1965. Even with this monumental event, the struggle for equal rights in central Alabama continued.

Jonathan "Jon" M. Daniels, August 20, 1965

In Hayneville, Lowndes County, Alabama, the Lowndes County Freedom Organization was one of the many organizations attempting to register and organize African-American voters and field African-American candidates for elective office. Volunteers from across the country remained in the county in assistance of these efforts. Among the volunteers was a young Harvard University Episcopal seminarian, Jonathan M. Daniels. Later, as a result of his voter registration activities, Daniels was incarcerated in the Lowndes County jail for one week, where he was remembered for his morale-building support of his fellow activists. After his release, Daniels, along with three other activists, prepared to enter a town store when a local highway worker and part-time deputy sheriff, Tom Coleman, brandishing a shotgun ordered the group to leave. When Coleman pointed the shotgun in the direction of a young African-American woman in the group, Ruby Sales, Daniels jumped in front of the woman just as he fired his weapon. Daniels was killed instantly while a minister with the group was wounded. The shooter was acquitted of murder by an all-white jury six weeks later.

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The Ministers' March

March 9, 1965

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--Partial text of telegram issued by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

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J.L. Chestnut: *We had a constitutional right to march from Selma to the state capitol in Montgomery on behalf of the right to vote”*

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National Historic Trail

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The story of the March

The climax to the decades-long voting rights crusade in Alabama erupted in March 1965 as Civil Rights activists converged on Selma, Alabama. The final push to achieve a nationwide solution to the disenfranchisement of African Americans came as the result of three strategically planned marches, the first of which took place on March 7, 1965.

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A second march ended in a prayer session at the point of Sunday's confrontation. When an injunction circumventing the march to the Alabama State Capitol was reversed, a plan was devised to conduct the monumental trek on Sunday, March 21, 1965. Thousands of people, representing many races and nationalities, moved before the eyes of the world in demonstration to guarantee the right to vote. The five-day/four-night event covered a 54-mile route



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along U.S. Highway 80 through chilling weather and rain. The result was the personal triumph of those who participated in the historic trek and the signing of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965.

Today, the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail stands as a testament to the sacrifices made in the triumph to preserve the “right to vote” as the bedrock of American democracy.

Landmarks along the trail that require preservation

Although the trail unit owns no property, there are significant historic structures/landmarks that are central to fully telling the story of the 1965 Voting Rights March. It is the job of trail staff to form and maintain partnerships that encourage the preservation of these entities. The following are just a few of the sites that require preservation to help trail staff tell the story of the trail...

- Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church
- Edmund Pettus Bridge
- U.S. Highway 80
- City of St. Jude
- Campsites
- Alabama State Capitol

Mission of National Park Service on the trail

It is the mission of the National Park Service to preserve and interpret the history of the sites associated with the 1965 voting rights march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama which resulted in the signing of the Voting Rights Act in August 6, 1965. The National Park Service works with the community to preserve America’s treasures so that future generations may enjoy our heritage.

along U.S. Highway 80 through chilling weather and rain. The result was the personal triumph of those who participated in the historic trek and the signing of the Voting Rights Act on August 6, 1965.

Today, the Selma to Montgomery National Historic Trail stands as a testament to the sacrifices made in the triumph to preserve the “right to vote” as the bedrock of American democracy.

Landmarks along the trail that require preservation

Although the trail unit owns no property, there are significant historic structures/landmarks that are central to fully telling the story of the 1965 Voting Rights March. It is the job of trail staff to form and maintain partnerships that encourage the preservation of these entities. The following are just a few of the sites that require preservation to help trail staff tell the story of the trail...

- Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church
- Edmund Pettus Bridge
- U.S. Highway 80
- City of St. Jude
- Campsites
- Alabama State Capitol

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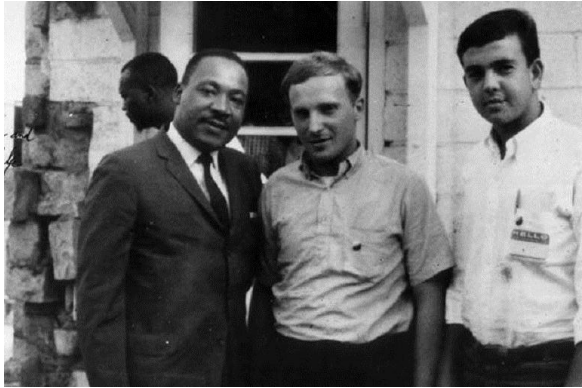
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S.C.O.P.E.



SCOPE volunteers Peter Geffen (right) and Moshe Shur with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., 1965. Photo used with author's permission from *The Scope of Freedom* by Willy Leventhal.

During the summer of 1965, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. assigned the Rev. Hosea L. Williams to lead an initiative to register new voters in 120 counties in six southern states (AL, GA, FL, VA, SC, and NC). The Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC)-Summer Community Organization and Political Education (SCOPE) project volunteers, predominately-white college students led by African-American community activists, registered more than 49,000 new black voters.

The need for SCOPE workers

In the spring of 1965, as the Voting Rights movement in Selma and the Selma-Montgomery March were challenging the segregated status quo, the struggle was far from over. The SCLC had decided that there was a need for white college students to journey south to join with local activists—to both prepare disenfranchised African Americans for voting, and if necessary, conduct street demonstrations that would put political pressure on the Congress should the proposed Voting Rights Bill



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of 1965 be met with congressional resistance and stalling, or even filibuster.

Training SCOPE volunteers

The SCOPE project began with a week-long training orientation at Morris Brown College in Atlanta led by Bayard Rustin, the organizer of the 1963 March on Washington. The orientation “faculty” included leaders from the movement, labor, government, academia, as well as Dr. King, Rev. Andrew Young, Rev. Ralph Abernathy, Junius Griffin, Rev. James Bevel, Stoney Cooks, Gwen Green and others on the SCLC Staff.

SCOPE volunteers in action

Initially, SCLC wanted 2,000 volunteers, and those who came sometimes were transferred or assigned to more than one county by their leader, Hosea Williams (a combat-decorated WWII veteran). Overall roughly 500 predominately-white college volunteers, representing nearly 100 universities, were deployed into 90 of the 120 SCOPE-targeted counties in the six states. The students were housed with African-American families who were paid \$15 a week for their room and board, which barely covered expenses. About 40 of the college volunteers were asked to join the SCLC Field Staff. They were then paid a subsistence salary of \$5 a week, with the African-American community providing housing and meals. Key Field Staff veterans from other SCLC campaigns were assigned to the SCOPE project including Rev. Willie Bolden, Rev. James Orange, Ben Van Clark, Jimmie L. Wells, Lula Williams, Gloria Wise, Pat Simpson, R.B. Cottonreader, J.T. Johnson, Tom Houck, Dana Swan, “Big Lester” Hankerson, Leon Hall, Ben “Sunshine” Owens and others.

The work of SCOPE produces measurable results

The Voting Rights Act of 1965 was first passed due in part to the work of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, as well as other civil rights organizations. These organizations mobilized tens of thousands of local activists who risked their lives to assure democracy for all. With the reauthorization of this landmark legislation in 2006, it is fitting that we reflect upon the contributions of these grassroots volunteers who helped in the passage of the initial Voting Rights Act of 1965.

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The “Stars for Freedom” Rally

March 24, 1965

The “March to Montgomery” held the promise of fulfilling the hopes of many Americans who desired to witness the reality of freedom and liberty for all citizens. It was a movement which drew many luminaries of American society, including internationally-known performers and artists. In a drenching rain, on the fourth day, March 24th, carloads and busloads of participants joined the march as U.S. Highway 80 widened to four lanes, thus allowing a greater volume of participants than the court-imposed 300-person limitation when the roadway was narrower. There were many well-known celebrities among the more than 25,000 persons camped on the 36-acre grounds of the City of St. Jude, a Catholic social services complex which included a school, hospital, and other service facilities, located within the Washington Park neighborhood. This fourth campsite, situated on a rain-soaked playing field, held a flatbed trailer that served as a stage and a host of famous participants that provided the scene for an inspirational performance enjoyed by thousands on the dampened grounds. The event was organized and coordinated by the internationally acclaimed activist and screen star Harry Belafonte, on the evening of March 24, 1965.

The night “the Stars” came out in Alabama

Mr. Belafonte had been an acquaintance of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. since 1956. He later raised thousands of dollars in funding support for the Freedom Riders and to bailout many protesters incarcerated during the era, including Dr. King while in jail in Birmingham in 1963. Mr. Belafonte had also organized a similar “stars” performance for the 1963 “March on Washington” and



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Concert gives voice to movement

Many of the widely heralded stars that appeared at St. Jude had also been present at the performance held at the Washington Monument in support of the "Freedom March on Washington" in 1963. Many of the well-known "freedom songs," such as "Oh, Freedom," were led by these artists and "A Change is Gonna' Come" by a group known as the "The SNCC Freedom Singers," which originally began as a quartet in Albany, Georgia in 1962. Speeches of inspiration were also delivered which, along with the musical participation, was to encourage the marchers to complete the final leg of their journey to the Alabama State Capitol. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. addressing the multitude of participants said, "We are about to engage in the greatest march that has ever been made on a state capitol in the South." The "Stars for Freedom Rally" became an unforgettable interlude on the historic march to Montgomery.



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Teachers March through Selma

January 22, 1965

"This march by the teachers, the largest professional group in the city and the county, enlisted others to come and join the movement."

--Rev. Frederick Reese

As the year 1965 opened, the active movement to achieve voting rights in Dallas County and the surrounding central Alabama counties was widespread. The Dallas County Voters League (DCVL), planning staffs of both the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) and Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), had outlined a program of action that included mass meetings and protests in Selma and the surrounding counties. The immediate goal was to force an end to the court injunction placed on mass gatherings and to test the efficacy of the Civil Rights Act passed the previous year. Further, it was hoped that their efforts might achieve, through concerted action, a solid commitment from the newly-elected Johnson administration to support a voting rights bill in Congress.

Selma protests breeds violent response

In Selma, protest activity focused on integrating local restaurants and the Hotel Albert. The other focal point of action was the Dallas County Courthouse where non-violent measures taken to register African Americans to vote met with violence from the Dallas County sheriff's deputies under the direction of Sheriff Jim Clark. The courthouse building also held the Selma City Jail where many activists had been unlawfully incarcerated. Clark's actions heightened public



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Teachers become engaged in protest

In this season of protest, the primary participants, thus far, had been college and high school students aligned with SNCC and religious leaders associated with SCLC. Many other residents sympathized with the movement but had not yet participated in direct action. Such was particularly true in the larger African-American business and professional community which had not yet responded to the hostile climate, in opposition to voting rights, provided by the Selma and Dallas County law enforcement authorities. But on January 22, 1965, a new and distinct group of voting rights supporters assumed the mantle of freedom in Selma.

Rev. Frederick D. Reese, a minister, educator and president of the Dallas County Voters' League (DCVL), was successful in coalescing a core group of 105 African-American teachers to participate in a march with the intent of registering to vote. The group began their journey from Clark Elementary School, located near the George Washington Carver Homes, and continued on to the steps of the Dallas County courthouse.

The teacher-participants, as well as Rev. Reese, faced threats of termination from the leadership of the School Board which failed to stem their determination to execute the march.

Teachers' actions garner tremendous support

After arriving at the courthouse, Rev. Reese was repeatedly assaulted by Sheriff Clark as he attempted to enter the courthouse for the purpose of voter registration. After a final attempt, the marchers led by Rev. Reese returned to Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church. This valiant effort was a strategic victory for the supporters of free voting in Alabama. Other groups of organized professionals soon followed the example set by Rev. Reese and the African-American teachers and the movement gained new momentum as the debate over voting rights became a major issue in Washington.

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Tent City

Conditions in the South

In the South, social status and economic levels were indistinguishable. One condition dictated the other. After the end of the Civil War, millions of formerly enslaved Africans remained in the eleven states of the former confederacy, often on the same plantations on which they had been enslaved. Though state-supported chattel slavery had ceased, a new system arose to replace the South's insatiable need for cheap labor.

Replacing chattel slavery was not easy for landowners. The appearance of federal laws and the Freedmen's Bureau assisted in establishing a brief period of economic and political independence for African Americans. But landowners began to use violence and subterfuge to keep those formerly enslaved within a chattel-like environment. The new system which would manifest itself and alter the "new South" for the next century became generically known as "tenant farming" or "sharecropping."

Working for "shares"

Essentially, African-American farmers did not own land on which they lived nor did they have any decision in the crops selected or the manner in which crops were planted. Such a condition made them vulnerable to the various methods used by former slaveholders to manipulate their lives.

The working arrangement generally involved working the land for a share of the crops produced, or "sharecropping." There were arrangements, mostly among whites, in which land would be rented for a fixed price in money of farm commodities produced during the year. By the 1930s, over half, about 60 percent, of all



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Working for "shares"

Essentially, African-American farmers did not own land on which they lived nor did they have any decision in the crops selected or the manner in which crops were planted. Such a condition made them vulnerable to the various methods used by former slaveholders to manipulate their lives.

The working arrangement generally involved working the land for a share of the crops produced, or "sharecropping." There were arrangements, mostly among whites, in which land would be rented for a fixed price in money of farm commodities produced during the year. By the 1930s, over half, about 60 percent, of all

cotton farms in the South were operated by tenants. After World War II, mechanization transformed the agricultural South and migrations of African Americans had removed much of the tenant labor force from the old plantations. Yet, an oppressive social caste system still dictated the lives of African Americans who remained without any representation or advocacy among the civil authorities. These conditions became the foundation for a pursuit of freedom, both economic and social among African Americans in the black belt counties of Alabama and elsewhere in the South. African Americans, living under these conditions, felt that obtaining the vote had the potential to improve the quality of their lives and so they marched for that right.

A place to call home

After the Voting Rights Act was signed on August 6, 1965 by President Lyndon Johnson, literacy tests were suspended, federal monitors were appointed to watch over elections, and the U.S. Attorney General was directed to challenge the use of poll taxes by states.

In that same month, Jonathan Daniels, an Episcopal seminarian helping desegregation efforts in Hayneville, Ala., was shot and killed there. And, white landowners in Lowndes County, retaliating against tenant farmers who registered, voted, or engaged in any voting rights activities, threw them off the lands where they worked and lived. In December, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and Lowndes County leaders helped several dispossessed families stay together and remain in the county by setting up a "tent city" on the Matthew Jackson family land at this point on U.S. Highway 80. They bought tents, cots, heaters, food, and water and helped several families turn "tent city" into a temporary home. Despite harassment—including shots regularly fired into the encampment—residents persevered for over two years as organizers helped them find new jobs, permanent housing, and new lives.

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